

REMARKS

Claims 1-19, 21-41, and 43-57 are pending, with claims 1, 12, 19, 23, 34, 41, 45 and 56 being independent. Claims 20 and 42 have been canceled. Claims 35-38 and 40 have been amended to correct dependency errors noted by the Examiner. Additionally, claims 45 and 56 are amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and allowance of the above-referenced application are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 45-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as not being limited to statutory subject matter. Independent claims 45 and 56 have been amended to recite a tangible medium for storing a first key. As such Applicants respectfully assert that the claims are in form for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 19, 21-22, 41, and 43-44 are rejected under 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,178,033 issued to Garcia. These contentions are respectfully traversed.

Garcia discloses a secure document that includes an encrypted data portion and a header. See Garcia at Abstract. The header includes security information that point to or includes access rules, a protection key, and a file key. Id. The access rules facilitate restrictive access to the encrypted data portion of the document. Id. The header is described in detail with respect to Fig. 3B and at Col. 11, line 28 to Col. 12, lines 39.

Claims 19 and 41 include, in part:

encrypting an electronic document; and
incorporating into the encrypted electronic document an address of a document control server, document-permissions information, and an encryption key useable in decrypting the encrypted electronic document, the encryption key being encrypted with a key generated by, and associated with a group of users of, the document control server;

(Emphasis added).

The Examiner argues that the header of Garcia reads on the above language, and recites as support column 7, lines 45-67, column 11, lines 40-67, and column 12, lines 1-65. The

Applicants disagree. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Garcia that the header includes an address of a document control server. The Examiner's own citation of Garcia fails to disclose or suggest the inclusion of a sever address. Column 7, lines 45-67 describes only the use of a key in the document header. Next, column 11, lines 40-67 describes the use of a markup language for the header structure, and recites portions including a key block list 352 that contains an encrypted protection key, which Fig. 3B suggests can be a UUID. This is a random number and is therefore not a document control server address. Finally, column 12, lines 1-65 describe other portions of the header structure, including the encrypted file key, security level information, and size information. Garcia at Col. 12, lines 7-31. Another portion 360 details the access rules. Garcia at Col. 12, lines 32-29.

Because no portion of the header includes the address of a document control server, Garcia fails to read on claims 19 and 41. Additionally, it should be noted that access to a remote server, if that occurs, does not require that information be embedded in the header. In fact, enabling a file to be examined by one or more servers, the location of which may change over time, teaches *against* including such information in the header. This is consistent with Garcia, in which the information in the header is specific to including encryption information and access rules that can be used entirely by a client device to access and use a secure file.

For at least all of the above reasons, independent claims 19 and 41 should be allowable over Garcia. Additionally, each of the dependent claims should likewise be allowed over Garcia as depending from an allowable base claim.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-8, 10-17, 23-30, 32-39, and 45-47 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Garcia and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0232318 to Altenhofen et al. Claims 9, 18, 31, and 40 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Garcia and in view of Altenhofen and DeMarines.

The Examiner admits that Garcia does not disclose synchronization of offline access information or pre-authorizing the client. See Office Action, page 5. The Examiner thus relies on Altenhofen to provide this concept in an attempt to create an obviousness rejection.

Altenhofen, however, fails to cure the noted deficiencies of Garcia, even if Altenhofen was combinable with Garcia (which is not conceded).

Altenhofen describes an e-learning system in which a student can take an offline course that is managed by an on-line system. To effect management of the course a state manager is used that identifies four states of transition. See Altenhofen at Abstract. The four states of transition include online, going online, offline, and going offline. This permits the online learner account to identify the appropriate state of the offline player (used by the student to take an offline course) as transitions are made between online and offline states. Id. As described by Altenhofen, "[b]y synchronizing the local course state and the central learning state, the learner may switch back and forth between online and offline training, if desired." Id at paragraph [0084].

Independent Claim 1 recites, in part,

receiving a request from a client to take an action with respect to a first electronic document; and

synchronizing offline access information with the client, in response to the request, to pre-authorize the client, to allow actions by a user as a member of a group of users, by sending to the client an update to offline access information retained at the client, the update comprising a first key associated with the group, the first key being useable at the client to access a second electronic document while offline by decrypting a second key in the second electronic document.

(Emphasis Added).

As described above, Altenhofen discloses an offline manager 830 that synchronizes local and central learning states. However, that synchronization is entirely unlike the claimed synchronization of independent claim 1. The synchronization described by claim 1 is of access information, including a first key, to pre-authorize the client to take actions as a member of a group. The similarities of Altenhofen and the claimed invention end with the common use of the term 'synchronizing'. The synchronizing in Altenhofen does not include an update to offline access information. Altenhofen does not perform the same or even a similar function to the synchronization described by the present invention. The synchronization of Altenhofen is used only to maintain state information, and provides no access control feature. As such, Altenhofen both fails to provide the synchronization of offline access information as required by the claim

and would not be relied on by one of ordinary skill in a combination with Garcia to teach pre-authorization of a client. Finally, it should be noted that nowhere in paragraphs [0080] to [0084], which are relied on by the Examiner, does Altenhofen describe that the synchronization is used to allow or block access by a client.

DeMarines fails to cure the noted deficiencies of Garcia and Altenhofen, even if DeMarines is combinable with Garcia and Altenhofen (which is not conceded). Thus, for at least all of the above reasons, independent claim 1 should be allowable over the combination of Garcia and Altenhofen. Additionally, because the other independent claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103, claims 12, 23, 34, 45, and 56, contain similar claim language as was distinguished above from the references cited by the Examiner, they should also be allowable over the combination of Garcia and Altenhofen. Each of the dependent claims should likewise be allowed as depending from an allowable base claim.

Conclusion

The foregoing comments made with respect to the positions taken by the Examiner are not to be construed as acquiescence with other positions of the Examiner that have not been explicitly contested. Accordingly, the above arguments for patentability of a claim should not be construed as implying that there are not other valid reasons for patentability of that claim or other claims.

A notice of allowance is respectfully requested. In the absence of such, a telephone interview with the Examiner and the Examiner's supervisor is respectfully requested to discuss the prior art being applied. Please apply any necessary charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

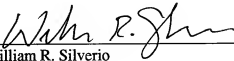
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Respectfully submitted,

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